By Mr. Smith.—Has been a builder all his life, and a surveyor seven years. The witness here made a speech.

The Judge.—Mr. Bowes, you never come here but what you make yourself an advocate. It is this advocacy of surveyors which makes their opinions appear valueless. You keep to surveying, and leave advocating to lawyers.

Mr. Davy, surveyor, of Battersea, said the work was not done well for a fourth-rate house. He took the quantities from Mr. Bowes, and he estimated the work at 47*l.* 1s. 10d.

The Judge.—The more experience I gain the less I understand of the estimates of surveyors and builders. As chairman of the Quarter Sessions, and Judge of many County Courts, I daily have to decide between surveyors. They take the part of advocates, for I invariably find that for whomsoever they are employed, so do they make their estimates tally. The most respectable surveyors act the same, and it is an impossibility to determine justly upon their evidence. Most of them are educated men, and must know the charges. Their wide estimates are to me unaccountable, and to juries most puzzling. To do justice where they or builders are concerned requires a court made up from the experienced of their ranks. It is utterly impossible for me to determine which are right, and I would be bound, if it were tried, the plaintiff could easily obtain 100 surveyors and builders to prove his work was well done, and worth the money, as defendant could get another 100 to swear to the contrary. In this case he thought the balance of testimony was in favour of defendant, and (although he could not say he was giving a right verdict), his judgment would be for the 10*l.* paid into Court, and he would not allow defendant's expenses.

IMPROVEMENT IN GAS MANUFACTURE.

We have occasionally pointed attention to the hydrocarbons and their singular combinations and changes as a hopeful source of those improvements and that cheapening of gas manufacture which we have long anticipated. The vegetable and animal creation teem with hydrocarbonaceous products which we yet hope to see turned to public profit in this way without either waste or nuisance, and with increased convenience as well as economy. One of the most recent attempts to realise these pleasant prospects appears to consist in the composition of an artificial fluid or oil easily convertible into illuminative gas, by combining palm oil with Canada balsam and caoutchouc in distillation in such a way as to leave no residuum that is not also resolvable into the same vegetable oil in new distillation. Much cheaper and more abundant ingredients, however, will doubtless yet be found to be easily combinable into the requisite fluid or solid form that will yield pure gas with facility. It is known, for instance, that linseed oil and cotton have, in certain circumstances, such a tendency to combine that they not only do so, but burst into flame spontaneously. Might not some hopeful experiments, with abundant ingredients such as these, and say turpentine, resin, tar, bitumen, cannel, and even common coal, be gone into, and the requisite mean fluid result be most readily and cheaply got? It is probable that any *three* or more hydro-carbons distilled in common will assume a more distinct and permanent intermediate form than any two so distilled. It is quite possible, too, that some of the more insoluble, such as cannel, may thus be readily convertible into the fluid form by means of an intermediate hydro-carbon acting in association with a highly hydrogenous solvent one. Even as it is, however, so far as regards economy no less than purity, it is alleged that the triune oil got from caoutchouc, Canada balsam, and palm oil, by distillation, does not cost in consumption more than at the rate of 2s. per 1,000 cubic feet of ordinary gas. The article has been patented by a Mr. Booth, and has been adopted by a new "Vegetable Gas Company," who mean to sell it in small quantities suitable for private houses, public buildings, light-houses, ships, &c. as well as on the great scale for towns. From a paragraph in the *Times*, it appears that "For some months past the process has been in use at Eton College, the Harrow Railway Station, the town of Blackpool, and other places; and certificates are given of the satisfaction it has afforded. A letter from Sir J. Herschel, the Master of the Mint, is also published, stating that from an examination of the apparatus he has been led to the conclusion that it has accomplished the practical solution of the problem of gas-lighting on a small scale without the unpleasant accompaniments of the existing and larger method. . . . . The capital proposed is 100,000*l.* and the board of directors is respectably constituted. There are, however," adds the *Times*, "several points of detail omitted from the prospectus, which will occur to those who read it, and upon which they can properly satisfy themselves only by direct inquiry."

Notices of Books.

Investments for the Working Classes. By W. R. Greg. Longman, Brown, and Co. 1852.

On the importance of providing and pointing out safe and profitable investments for the savings of the frugal and industrious among the humbler classes of society—to arrive at an idea of the magnitude of which, it need only be stated that the deposits in savings banks *alone* in November, 1850, amounted to 27,198,563*l.*—too much can scarcely be said; and we are glad to see a reprint in a cheap form of Mr. W. R. Greg's able paper on this subject which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*. He says truly "Every defaulting savings bank"—Rochdale, to wit,—"every absconding treasurer to a sick club or a friendly society—every bankrupt railway—every fraudulent or clumsy building league—every chimerical or mismanaged land association, preaches a sermon on the folly of frugality and providence not soon forgotten and not easily counteracted. It is the duty of the state to see that there shall be no needless or artificial impediments to the safe keeping and the profitable employment of the first small beginnings of a stream which may swell into such a mighty flood of fertilising waters, and sedulously to take heed that no channel in which it can flow without waste or danger shall be closed to it. It is not for the Legislature to contrive that the guinea of the rich man and the penny of the poor man shall yield an equal revenue: it is for the Legislature diligently to see to it, that by no act, connivance, or negligence of theirs shall this desirable result be hindered." The benefits to be derived by the working population from the general establishment—cheaply legalised and properly guarded—of partnerships with limited liability, equivalent to the *partnership en commandite* of our continental neighbours, we have repeatedly urged in The Builder, and it has been declared by competent authority that arrangements for this could be easily and effectually added to our present law, "as the Crown can now grant, through the instrumentality and on the responsibility of the Board of Trade, charters of incorporation, conferring the privilege of limited liability—each shareholder being answerable only to the extent of the full amount of his share—and enforcing publicity of accounts, shares, and transfers. But the expense of obtaining these charters has hitherto been so great as to render them virtually inaccessible to any but large undertakings and wealthy parties. It is in evidence, that a company which was formed for the purpose of improving the dwellings of the poor in the county of Gloucester was broken up in consequence of the inability to obtain a charter except at a cost which would have been fatal to their humble means; and a similar association in London, which did obtain such a charter, was almost ruined by it; the charter and the legal expenses attending its procural, exceeding 1,100*l.*" Those who are anxious for information on the subject of which this pamphlet treats may consult it with advantage.

The Betting Book. By George Cruikshank. With Cuts. London: Cash and Co. 1852.

Mr. Cruikshank has entered the field rather late against the betting-houses, which have sprung up like foul *fungi* all over the town; but better now than not at all. This pamphlet is addressed rather to the removal of what leads to them than themselves simply, and asks with force, "How is it possible for Parliament, with any show of decency, to pass a law to shut up these offices, they being opened expressly for the purpose of betting upon the horses, kept and run, and betted upon, by the very men (or by their friends and connections) who will have to make the law?"

The pamphlet is written with the honest earnestness that distinguishes all Mr. Cruikshank's endeavours in aid of morality and the well-being of the community.

We will take this opportunity to caution the owners of houses against the betting-shop gentry as tenants. Several of them are usually in league together, and they refer to one another, and have so plausible a story that parties take them as tenants without suspicion, and then so defective are our laws that there is the greatest difficulty in getting them out and avoiding serious loss. We have a case before us to illustrate it. An owner had the misfortune to let a house some time ago to a nest of swindlers of this description. It is now shut up, has been so for months, possession of it denied him, and a scoundrel pettifogger, in league with them, coolly tells him "You can do nothing till November, and unless you give us a sum of money (besides losing all the rent due) we shall keep you out as long as possible." The rent being just above 50*l.* a year, the County Court is not available; but the owner intends to see what the laws against conspiracy may do to punish such vagabonds, and we mention the circumstance as a warning to others. Some of our legal readers may be able to give him a useful hint.

Gold Mining and Assaying: a Scientific Guide for Australian Emigrants. By John Arthur Phillips, F.C.S. Metallurgic Chemist; formerly Professor of Metallurgy at the College for Civil Engineers; Author of "A Manual of Metallurgy," &c. Griffin and Co. 53, Baker-street, London.

Notes on the Distribution of Gold throughout the World, including Australia, California, and Russia; with five Maps. Second Edition. London: James Wyld, Royal Exchange and Charing-cross.

If this be not "the age of gold" of ancient heathen prophecy, on which we are now entering, it is something not unlike it; all the more especially, since it immediately succeeds "the age of iron," through which we have so lately been passing. That gold is a very generally diffused, though not very abundant metal has been well known; but its discovery only now, in so many different places, so simultaneously, and so widely scattered in each locality, is all the more singular on this account, and leads us to the expectation that even yet there are new discoveries to be made.

Amongst the successive publications on the subject of gold to which the recent discoveries are giving rise, we have not seen one so comprehensive and complete in itself, as a guide to the search for gold, advancing from the most simple and primitive to the most elaborate and scientific instruction, as the one first named in the present notice. What it mainly wants is the no less instructive and useful maps in Mr. Wyld's little pamphlet, which follows. There is one minor feature in this work of Mr. Phillips, too, which we think might have been most usefully extended, namely, the engraved sketches of the outward appearance of good localities in some of the gold-bearing districts. To those not much acquainted with geology these are calculated to be of special use as a guide, whether to districts already known or to new discoveries. Besides its more scientific information, which is also illustrated with engravings of all sorts of tools and apparatus requisite to the gold-digger and assayer (the latter, by the way, with the necessary reagents, provided by the publishers), Mr. Phillips's book contains a full account of the Government regulations as to the Australian diggings, and also some preliminary information as to the other known sources of gold throughout the world; but more of this last sort of information will be found in the notes which accompany Mr.

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